

EPA REGION 3 ENVIRO-BYTES

Issues & Events in EPA's Mid-Atlantic Region
April 6, 2001

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ADMINISTRATOR WHITMAN SIGNS ONBOARD AIR EMISSIONS RULE

On March 28, EPA Administrator Whitman signed a final rule to require states subject to auto emissions testing to incorporate checks of second generation on-board diagnostics systems into their inspection and maintenance programs. This rule allows these system checks to be done in lieu of conventional tailpipe emissions testing on 1996 and newer model year cars equipped with on-board systems. EPA's rule calls for this testing to be incorporated into inspection and maintenance programs beginning January 2002, and provides for air quality "credits" similar to the most stringent emissions tailpipe tests. On-board diagnostic system checks entail a simple plug-in of a scan tool computer to a vehicle's dashboard. The scan tool checks for stored trouble codes, which the on-board computer stores when a monitored component or system fails.

DC MAYOR REQUESTS \$12 MILLION FOR WASTEWATER UPGRADES

On March 28, D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams asked a subcommittee

of the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee for money to help pay for combined sewer overflow repairs. He estimated the total cost to be between \$1 billion and \$2 billion. Actual costs will be better understood when D.C. completes its Combined Sewer Overflow Long-Term Control Plan, the first draft of which is due July 2001. Combined sewer overflows occur during heavy rains. Sewers that carry both runoff and sewerage get overtaxed during rainstorms, causing sewerage to drain into river and streams.

EPA RESPONDS TO EMERGENCY DE-ICER SPILL IN DC'S ANACOSTIA RIVER

EPA responded to a 5,000-gallon spill of de-icer on April 3 at a D.C. Department of Public Works salt storage facility near the Anacostia River. A public works inspector had noticed an active leak previously that day. It was estimated that a slow leak from an open valve had continued over several days and traveled across the yard area to a storm drain which is connected to the Anacostia River. Most of the contained material was apparently cleaned up by the evening of April 3 and hauled off site for staging and proper disposal.

LANDFILLS AT NAVAL FACILITY IN SILVER SPRING, MD GET SCRUTINY

On March 28, a Proposed Remedial Action Plan for two landfills at Naval Surface Warfare Center-White Oak was issued for public comment. NSWC-White Oak is a former Navy facility just off of the Washington, DC beltway which has been transferred to the GSA. The landfills are located adjacent to property where the GSA is constructing a facility to be leased to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA union has expressed some dissatisfaction with the site of the new facility and some concern regarding environmental conditions at the former Navy property. However, any threat to FDA employees should be mitigated by the time FDA occupies the property.

WARM WEATHER ALLOWS FOR MAJOR WORK ON SWANSON CREEK OIL SPILL

After a winter of general maintenance of spill booms and other small tasks, additional cleanup work at the Swanson Creek Marsh oil spill site in Chalk Point, Md. is ready to begin again in earnest. Fifty-three work zones were originally established during the emergency response last Spring. Of those, 15 zones had still not been determined to be clean, when compared with established standards, when winter began.

The goal this Spring is to finish cleanup in those 15 zones. To start that process, multi-agency shoreline cleanup assessment teams will begin to review the condition of the 15 zones starting the week of April 9, to identify remaining work.

EPA BEGINS REMOVAL CLEANUP AT PHILADELPHIA METAL FINISHER

Removal operations began this week at the York Metals Finishing site in Philadelphia. The site is a bankrupt electroplating operation with a history of environmental violations. The owner, now deceased, and the corporation, were convicted of criminal violations in 1995 after a joint investigation by EPA and the Philadelphia Water Department. After paying penalties and agreeing to install pretreatment equipment, the corporation continued to operate until last year. The now-abandoned site includes vats filled with plating solutions of strong acids, metal salts and cyanide concentrations measured at 28,000 ppm. The cleanup is expected to take several months.

MOTIVA, DELAWARE CITY, DE TO PAY \$30K FOR LAX CHEMICAL REPORTING

On March 30, EPA entered into a consent agreement with Motiva Enterprises, a petroleum refinery located in Delaware City, De. The company agreed to pay \$30,800 in penalties for toxic chemical release reporting violations. Specifically, the company failed to timely submit a toxic chemical release form for manganese compounds for reporting year 1996, and submitted inaccurate reports for benzene, xylene, and propylene for reporting year 1996. An administrative complaint assessing these violations was issued to the company on March 31, 2000 with a proposed penalty of \$51,700.

PCB VIOLATIONS ALLEGED AT ERIE COMPANY

On March 21, EPA issued an administrative complaint to the Gunite EMI Corp. in Erie, Pa. for improper storage and disposal of PCBs, failure to register PCB transformers with the local fire response personnel, improper marking of PCB storage area and failure to mark drums containing PCB-contaminated fluids. The complaint carries a potential maximum penalty of \$139,000.

DELAWARE MOBILE HOME PARK NOW COMPLYING WITH DRINKING WATER RULES

Granada Mobile Home Park, serving approximately 90 people in Kent County, Delaware has returned to compliance for long-standing nitrate maximum contaminant level (MCL) violations. The mobile home park has had MCL violations for many years. The Delaware Health and Social Service efforts at compliance assistance had not been effective with the operator and they referred the system to EPA for enforcement in 1998. EPA issued a Notice of Violation and the operator cooperated by replacing the existing well and distribution system and providing public notice to the customers of the violations. The new well meets drinking water standards and the State is satisfied with the current compliance of the system.

OVER 200 LEARN ABOUT PCBS IN DEL ESTUARY

The last of three public workshops addressing PCBs in the Delaware Estuary was held on March 26, in Mt. Holly, NJ. Commissioner Robert Shinn of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection opened the meeting and participated throughout the entire session asking questions of the panel and answering questions from the audience. The workshops were held to provide stakeholders with a better understanding of PCBs in the Estuary. Over 200 individuals from government, academia, non-profits, consultants, industry, the media and the public attended the three workshops. The previous workshops were held in Wilmington and Philadelphia.

DOUGLASSVILLE SUPERFUND SETTLEMENT WILL FUND CLEANUP

The EPA reached a final settlement with 22 parties in the Douglassville Disposal Site litigation. The agreement requires the settling parties to fund the completion of the \$14-to-\$18 million cleanup at this former oil disposal site in Berks County, Pa. The settling parties will also reimburse the government for the more than \$13 million that has already been spent to clean up the site.

EPA KEEPS CONTAMINANTS FROM FLOWING INTO MONONGAHELA

On March 21, EPA took emergency measures to stem the flow of contaminants into the Monongahela River from the Big John's Salvage Superfund site in Fairmont, W.Va. Contaminants at the site include mercury, cadmium and petroleum hydrocarbons. removal action plan.

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